

# “Tulare I P”



## WHEN SHOULD CROSSWALKS BE PAINTED?

Many people think marked crosswalks are safer for pedestrians than unmarked crosswalks. That is not always the case. In fact, studies in San Diego (1972), Long Beach (1986) and throughout California on State Highways (1996) actually indicate that for uncontrolled locations (i.e., no stop signs or traffic signals), the incidence of pedestrians being struck by cars is actually *higher* when there is a painted crosswalk. There are several reasons for this:

- Motorists traveling at moderate to high speeds cannot easily see the crosswalk stripes in time to stop for pedestrians.
- It is believed that pedestrians tend to lower their guard when they cross between two marked crosswalk lines. They erroneously believe the two lines offer protection from vehicles. This is especially true with children and elderly pedestrians.
- Without marked crosswalks, pedestrians are more likely to watch for approaching traffic.
- Many pedestrians believe that when they are in a painted crosswalk they have an absolute “right of way” regardless of the speed and proximity of traffic. This is not true.

So if marked crosswalks don't improve pedestrian safety, why use them at all? The purpose of marked crosswalks is to show pedestrians where to cross, not to show drivers where a pedestrian may enter the roadway. The markings are most useful at signalized or stopped intersections with unusual geometrics or large numbers of pedestrians. Crosswalks serve primarily to guide pedestrians in the proper paths.

If crosswalks are to be installed across uncontrolled, high-speed approaches to intersections or at mid-block locations, they must be based on traffic and engineering studies and, if warranted, should include advance signing to alert motorists of the possibility of pedestrians.

School crosswalks are installed according to rules and regulations established by the California Vehicle Code. These marked crosswalks are used to guide large numbers of school children in close proximity to schools. The location of school crosswalks must be coordinated with each school's "Suggested Route to School" and when installed, prescribed advance signing and pavement legends are used.

Pedestrians must be on the alert when crossing a street - under any conditions!

### “TIP”: Transportation Information Program



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